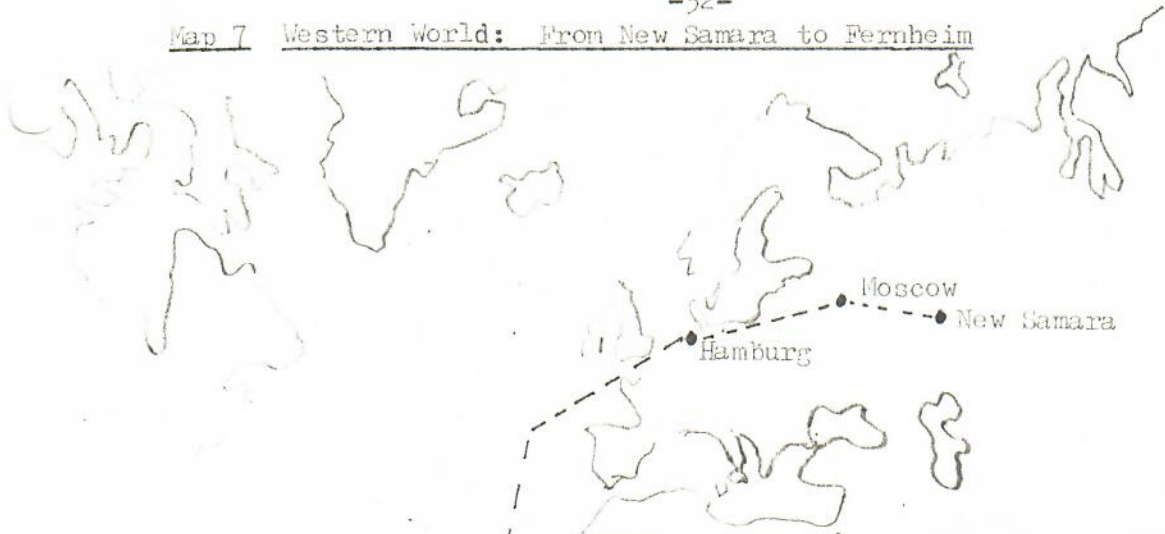


Map 7 Western World: From New Samara to Fernheim



see inset



Katharina(D1) 14, Jacob Jr.(D2) 10?, Margaret(D3) 7, Sarah(D4) 4?, Maria(D5) 2, and Henry(D6) 1.

#### Pioneer Life in the Paraguayan Chaco

Though Jacob and his family had escaped from Russia, and they had now been given a new land to live in, their problems were far from solved, for very primitive conditions and almost unbearable demands of pioneer life awaited them in Paraguay.

The Fernheim settlement was in West Paraguay, an area known as the Chan Chaco. It has a very hot and dry climate and an occasional frost in the winter time. The rainy season is not the same every year. The Chaco has a sandy soil, hardwoods, thorny bushes, various cactus plants and other types of vegetation which makes the area so very unique.

The original Fernheim settlement was to be composed of thirteen villages, 306 families and 306 farms of 100 acres each.<sup>12</sup> Already in Germany the refugees had organized their colony, decided who was going to live in each village, and who would be the village Schulze (administrative head) once they arrived.

Once the settlement began, the colonists had to develop roads through the wilderness, following the trails of the military out-posts. Besides the Canadian Mennonites who settled in the Chaco two years earlier, the Chaco up to this point had only been occupied by nomadic Indians. The Paraguayan people considered the Chaco almost uninhabitable because of its harsh conditions. They referred to the Chaco as "the green hell." The Mennonites had the undescribably difficult task of taming the Chaco.

Until the land was surveyed, the new immigrants lived in tents which were provided for them. After the village plan had been plotted out on the land, Jacob and his family began to make their new home in the section designated to be village No. 10, Rosenort. The village names were very familiar names which the Mennonites had since their days in Prussia.

The Mennonite settlements experienced almost unbearable hardships from the start. Their first makeshift houses were without floors or ceiling, with thatched roofs made of the native bitter grass, or perhaps of discarded galvanized sheet metal. Windows without glass admitted an invasion of flies, mosquitos, and all the other pesty insects



that infest a hot swampy, wilderness.<sup>13</sup> Furniture had to be made also, and the only material available were the local hardwoods. With wood-working Jacob must of had an advantage, considering his experience and teaching from his father.

The first concern of the settlers was the search for fresh water. A number of wells were dug, but most of them contained only salt or bitter water. Some villagers were forced to carry water for themselves and their stock for miles, from the supply of more fortunate neighbouring villages.

The refugees were basically penniless, having left everything behind in Russia. Before they did depart from Germany, relief agencies had donated some basic household equipment, tools and clothing. MCC also purchased some agricultural impliments to help get the refugees started.

The familiar crops like wheat and vegetables refused to be grown in the Chaco. Crop after crop was experimented with, but few things could be grown successfully. It took years before it was found that such crops as sorghum, peanuts, beans, cotton and even watermelons could be grown with success and fair profit. However far too often, even when growing crops <sup>gave</sup> promise of a good harvest, either a prolonged drought, or a sudden swarm of grasshoppers in a few days would blast away all the cherished hopes of better times ahead. Even when there was surplus crop to sell, they were hundreds of kilometres from markets and sources of supplies, with no transportation facilities other than the ox cart.

Under these severe conditions which tended to undermine the physical stamina of these early settlers, it was to be expected that diseases would take their toll among them. The extremely harsh climactic conditions were largely responsible. The Chaco is located between 57 and 63 degrees latitude and 19 and 25 degrees longitude. The subtropical climate of the Chaco caused many hardships and diseases which had to be endured without hospitals, medicine, medical doctors, or nurses. At this same time the Mennonites in Canada and the United States were experiencing the Great Depression, making aid to Paraguay slow in coming.

Disease and death struck especially hard in the first year of their settlement(1930). The Fast family was not left untouched by

the grief and sorrow of death. The little daughter of Jacob and Margareta, Sarah(D4), who was already sick in Russia, could not survive the harsh conditions of the Chaco. Later that same year on December 15, 1930, Jacob's dear wife Margareta also died. Is it any wonder why the Paraguayans called the Chaco the green hell? The experiences are difficult to imagine, and even more difficult to put into words.

Henry C. Smith, in his book "The Story of the Mennonites," wrote the following:

...it is extremely doubtful whether any other people than these pious and industrious Mennonites, overjoyed at their escape from Russia, and with no other prospect for a future home than the Chaco wilderness, would have been willing to endure these hardships. They were willing to face any trial and undergo any distress if only their religious faith and the spiritual welfare of their children could be spared. So great was their gratitude that they set apart November 25, the day they left Moscow, as a special annual day of thanksgiving for their deliverance.<sup>14</sup>

Throughout the years in Fernheim, conditions improved only marginally. Year by year a little more land was cleared, and living quarters became somewhat more tolerable. However, the destructive forces of nature never let up. The ravenous grasshoppers, the ants and fleas which seemed to be everywhere, the tropical sun, droughts and dust storms continued their devastating visits.

In 1931 Jacob remarried to Helene Janzen(b.1902). At the time she was 30 years old and Jacob was 39. The second marriage again marked a new beginning in Jacob's life. The family grew too. Their first child together, Peter(D7) was born in 1932, and a second son Cornelius (D8) was born in 1935.

On the outskirts of the settlement were rather friendly Indians. The small bands of Indians that roamed the underbrush of the Chaco were quite peaceful and harmless. They were a great help to the Mennonites in clearing the underbrush from the first farms.

In the years 1932 to 1935, the Bolivian-Paraguayan War (known as the Chaco War) was fought not far from the Mennonite settlements. Though soldiers were frequently seen and the roar of canons often heard, the



Mennonites were not seriously affected. In fact, they actually benefited as a result. The military hospital was made available to the Mennonite settlers, and the military became the first to buy produce from the settlers.

The charter granted to the Mennonites by the Paraguayan government permitted them a wide degree of freedom in the selection of forms of local control. Fernheimers chose the same system they practiced in Russia since the early 1800's. The colony superintendent (Oberschulze) and the village local mayors (Schulze), and their assistants were all democratically elected by the men of the village. As in Russia and in Prussia, they also established a fire and livestock insurance system.

Jacob was never a loud or outspoken man, but he had always been concerned for people and was seen as somewhat of a leader among them. In Russia he had become Schulze and even Oberschulze at a very young age. In his village of Rosenort in Fernheim, it was not long before his neighbours recognized his gifts and elected him as their Schulze. Relatives remember Jacob as being foremost a very brave man, and a man who would always help those around him the best he could.

Control of the schools also continued to be a major interest for the Mennonites. In Fernheim the re-education of their children was a matter of grave concern, since they had already been subjected in Russia to ten years of influence by communist teachers. Therefore it was understandable to see <sup>that</sup> the first crude building erected in every village after homes were built was the primitive little school hut. There were actually a number of qualified, efficient teachers among the Mennonites. By the mid-1800's Mennonites in Russia had already established numerous centres of higher education, and before World War I a few hundred even received university education in various centres throughout Europe. The courses taught <sup>in Fernheim</sup> were German language, history, nature study, math, singing, religion and later Spanish was also taught.

On March 23, 1933 the Pastors celebrated the marriage of their oldest daughter, Katharina (D1) to Hermann Jesse. Hermann was well known to the family, having worked for Jacob back in Krassikow, New Samara. The Jesse's had two children in Fernheim, Henry (B1-1934) and Margaret (E2-1937).

Though life in Russia after World War I had not been so easy, the disappointments and hardships of Paraguay were enough to cause a good

deal of homesickness. Besides the poor environmental conditions, the severe water shortage, poor transportation facilities and the irregular supplies of essential foods made life extremely difficult day after day. In 1936 a crisis hit the Fernheim Colony as many farmers were simply frustrated with the Chaco as a place of permanent settlement. Many felt that they should perhaps seek a more suitable place in Paraguay to live. The Colony went to MCC to ask for help. Orie Miller, the Mennonite Central Committee secretary in the Chaco was asked if the relief organization would help finance a new colony. MCC was unwilling to start all over again, feeling it was probably best to keep on working with their conditions in the Chaco. The people were polled in January of 1937, and only 92 of the 413 families voted for staying in the Chaco. Jacob and his family voted against staying in the Chaco. Despite public opinion, MCC would not change their position. It was then decided that, with or without MCC aid, the colony would begin looking for more suitable land. That same year a three man delegation made an exploratory trip into other Paraguayan regions southeast of the Chaco. Eventually they selected a location 70 kilometres east of the Paraguayan port city of Rosario, which straddles the Paraguayan river. The exodus of those wanting to resettle began in the summer of 1937. Jacob's family and the young family of his daughter Katharina(D1) were two of the 144 families who left the Chaco hoping to improve their lot in a different area of Paraguay.

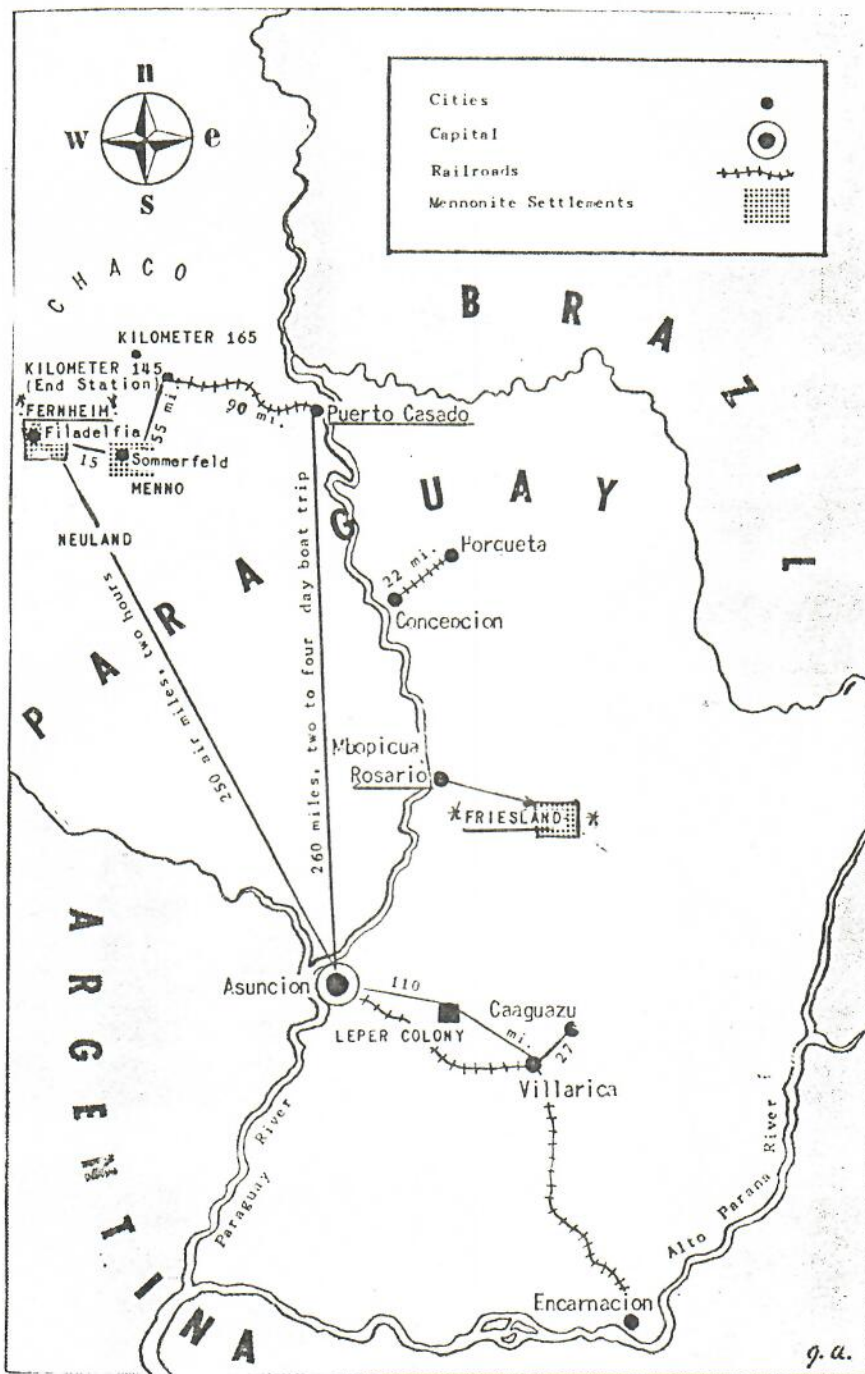
#### Friesland

The land the dissatisfied Fernheimers negotiated for was very different from the Chaco. East Paraguay has a subtropical climate, but unlike the Chaco, it has regular rainfall and dense vegetation. On the average, the annual rainfall for the Chaco is only about 75 centimetres, while East Paraguay receives about 150 centimetres annually, twice the amount that falls in the Chaco. The weather in the east was not so hot, and a real joy was that their new land had a good supply of fresh "sweet" water.

The colony was officially established in September of 1937, and it was given the name "Friesland" after the native land of the early leader of the Mennonites, Menno Simons. Every family came with a wagon, two horses, two cows and some chickens. As was the pattern of Menno-



Map 8 Paraguay: Fernheim to Friesland, 1957.



nites, the colony divided up into numerous villages, each containing approximately twenty to thirty families.

Pioneering in Friesland was also very difficult, and the people's high hopes of an easier existance soon faded. The settlers bought 19,250 acres of land. 38% of this land was dense forest, 7% swamp, 38% was very low lying land suitable only for grazing, leaving only 7% of the land which was higher camp and quite suitable for cultivation.

The first houses were constructed from sod and logs cut from the large trees in the colony. The portion of land that could be used for cultivation had to be broken up and prepared for planting. For baking, they hollowed out a door into the huge ant hills which sometimes reached a height of a metre and a half, and then used the hill as a bake oven!

Jacob settled in village number two, Grossweide. The first year in Friesland Jacob bought an additional nine cows and a grinder, from which the family recieved some initial income. Their chief crops in the earlier years were corn, manioca and cotton. Once established, they built a home made of adobe-- a brick material of sun dried earth and straw.

#### School and Church

In 1938 two schools were built, and later three others, plus two high schools were added to the colony. Jacob's son Peter(D7) started school in March of 1939 at the age of six and a half. The school was one large room with a movable partition in the middle. There was one teacher to each side of the room, each teacher responsible for three grades. All the children were in school from 7:30 am until noon. They did their homework between lunch and 2:30 (Siesta time), at which time they did their chores around the farm until supper. After 6:00 pm they would feed the animals and do homework by kerosene lamps.

The school building was situated in the centre of Grossweide, only 100 metres from the East home. On Sunday morning the partition in the school was removed, and the building served as the centre of worship for the village. It is important to note that the Mennonite group was divided up into two denominations, Kirchliche- or main line Mennonites, and the Mennonite Brethren (a denominational split occured among the Mennonites in Russia back in the 1860's). Members from both of the



groups lived in Grossweide, and all members of the village met together for worship in the one village school building. The only separation in the worship service was that of men and women: men were on the left, and women sat in the right half of the school. The two denominations did however practice separate communion and baptismal services. Later in the 1950's, North American Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren sent the colony aid to build two large worship houses, one for each denomination. Weekly youth group and singing meetings were also part of church life.

#### Life in Friesland

Each year the settlers in Friesland hoped for better conditions, praying that the next year's crop might be better than what they had had that year. Often insects, especially locusts would wipe out a whole crop in a few days, shattering many hopes, and almost breaking the spirits of these farmers. Yet each year with increased courage and patience, the farmers would seed their land hoping for the best.

On July 5, 1941 a number of the farmers got together and organized the Friesland Agricultural Co-operative. Its purpose was to provide adequate and economical purchase of necessities for the colony and to try to market and profitably sell colony produce. This organization was helpful in keeping the colony financially stable.

Jacob Fast worked very hard in order to establish a stable living for his family. Besides farming, he tried to make extra money through other efforts. He would take much of his own produce and drive it out to the port city of Rosario where he would then sell it. The trip to Rosario took a day and a half by wagon one way. Eggs were a good money maker. In 1946 he could sell a dozen eggs for 50 Pesos. On the trip back to the colony, Jacob would do some business for the Co-operative, picking up supplies for them in Rosario and delivering them to the colony. Jacob was known as always being a very industrious and somewhat restless man. He was a reasonable businessman, and always willing to help his neighbours when he could. As in New Samara and Fernheim, in Friesland Jacob was respected enough to be elected Schulze numerous times and also Oberschulze for a number of years. An Oberschulze was always a respectful citizen, a man usually recognized for his wisdom, insight and leadership.

The Fast family continued to grow in Friesland. Hermine (D9) was

born in 1938, Regine(D10) in 1941 and also Albert(D11) born in 1945(?), but died a few hours after birth. The oldest son, Jacob Jr.(D2) left the colony shortly before World War II. Under the influence of Nazi propoganda, a number of Mennonite young people and some entire families returned to Germany. Jacob Jr. was caught in Europe during the war where he was then killed.

In order to scrape by, all members of the family had to work very hard. During the school holidays, the kids could not just play all day. The day started at sunrise, and usually the family would be awakened by the sounds of the cows, pigs and roosters. In the morning the girls usually were<sup>responsible</sup> for milking the cows and feeding the chickens. The boys would comb the horses, then hitch them to the wagons, split wood for the day, get enough manioca (potato substitute) for the day and also some sugar cane for the horses to eat. All the other farm animals had to be fed and watered too, for raising livestock was the most profitable industry for the family and for the colony. Throughout the day there was always field work that had to be done. The older kids would spend many hours hoeing and cultivating behind the horse. The small children were also very useful in cultivating. As someone older worked the plow, a younger child would sit on one of the horses and make sure that the horse would go in a straight line.

In letters from 1946, Jacob indicates that he seeded three and a half hectares of corn and beans, four hectares of cotton and twelve hectares of manioca and kafir (a grain sorghum which was grown for cattle feed). In that year Jacob figured that he had planted the most in the village. He wrote that he did not like to sing songs of lament, but the previous year had been very bad for them, for locusts had eaten all the cotton they had planted that year. In Russia he heard a saying that it is not difficult to become a farmer, but it was difficult to remain one. He states that it is all the more true in Paraguay. He wanted to write something good about life in Paraguay, but he wrote that he would be lying if he did.

A letter written by his wife a few months earlier makes it clear why the once prosperous Russian-Mennonite farmer now found the occupation to be so very difficult. The cattle had only enough feed to barely stay alive, and many of the chickens were becoming sick too. From the nine cows they had started with, only one was left living.



That one cow had to provide enough milk for nine people. Later that year that one cow broke it's leg and therefore had to be slaughtered. At this time his wife Helena was very sick with dropsy, and was put on a milk and vegetable diet. Vegetables could not be properly grown in Priesland, and with the one cow gone, the family had some very difficult times. The availability of flour was also quite minimal, making life for the man of the family difficult, for he was to be the provider.

Canadian relatives would try to help the family out somewhat. When asked what they needed, Jacob responded that they were in need of summer clothes, sun hats and pillow cases. The sun hats and pillow cases would get well worn from the intense heat and sweat which seemed always to run. Sometimes money was also sent. In 1946 the Past's received \$30.00 dollars from Helena's brother Isbrand Janzen in Canada. When exchanged, the dollars became 9,600 Pesos which with lots could be done.

In the middle of 1945, Jacob's wife Helena became very sick with dropsy ( or edema). It was a fairly prolonged illness in which her whole body became bloated with excess fluid from head to toe. In March of 1946 she was in the hospital and had eight litres of fluid removed from her body. It was a very painful sickness. In June it became so bad that many nights and days were spent screaming in pain. On August 8, 1946 Helena Past died, her body full of fluid. The next day the funeral was held at the school yard. It was a very large funeral, for the whole colony was invited. She was then buried in the grave yard only 100 metres from the home..

The death obviously had a very big effect on the family. Jacob had now lost two wives to the Paraguayan wilderness. Jacob's children from the first marriage were already older at this time, but the children he had with Helena were still so very young: Peter(D7) 14; Cornelius(D8) 11; Hermine(D9) 8; and Regine(D10) only 5. In a letter written to Helena's brother two days after the death, Jacob reflects that everyone talks of Canada as the land flowing with milk and honey. He knew what that was like, for he too lived in such a place for most of his life; but that was taken away from him in a matter of a few years. He now knew both ends of the rope, and he wrote to his Canadian brother-in-law saying, "we don't know how much longer it will be so nice in Canada."

### Friesland After World War II

Though Paraguay did enter ~~the~~ World War II, the Mennonites were hardly affected. The Mennonite's privilege of military exemption was honoured throughout the war's duration.

Friesland never prospered the way the colonists had hoped it would, but by the 1950's life was already becoming more stable. After World War II, Mennonite Central Committee began to take an interest in the colony and helped them out in a number of ways, including the building and developing of a lumber industry, building roads and also a hospital for the colony. With a lumber mill established, the farmers could sell their fallen trees to the lumber mill where it would be cut and taken to Rosario for sale. Transportation improved with the better roads and the trip went much quicker. The hospital was a real blessing, not only to the Mennonites, but especially to the Spanish in the area.

At the completion of the war, there were again many Mennonite refugees in Europe. Because no other country would take them, MCC arranged for them to settle in Paraguay. The first group of immigrants were housed in Friesland in 1947 because a revolution in Paraguay made transportation into the Chaco impossible. Many of these refugees were women who had been widowed by the war. One of these women, Mrs. Wilhelmine Loetkemann took up settlement in Friesland. On the eighth of June, 1947 Jacob(C4) and Wilhelmine were married. Wilhelmine had three, already older children, from her first marriage: Maria, Frieda(married a Fedrau and also widowed), and Henry.

A number of Jacob's children got married and started families of their own. Margaret(D3) married Cornelius Harder, and the couple moved to Buenos Aires, Argentina. They had two children, Helmut(E1-1945) and Eduardo(E2-1949). Maria(D5) married Silvestre Aranda, and they set up their homestead in the Argentinian Chaco. They had three children: Luis(E1-1950), Carlos(E2-1954), and Mario(E3-1956). Jacob's son Henry(D6) married Dido Capussi, and the couple also decided to make their home in Buenos Aires where there were more opportunities to be found. They had two children, Karin(E1-1958) and Rudolf(E2-1961). The oldest daughter Tina (Katharina-D1) and her husband Hermann Jesse saw their family continue to grow. In Friesland they had six more children: Frieda(E3-1939), Adina(E4-1942), Lydia(E5-1944), Victor(E6-1948), Willy(E7-1950) and Harry(E8-1953).



Jacob's younger children all attended school through to grade six, and then were encouraged to take one year of high school in the central village. After finishing school, the children worked full time farming with their father.

#### Decision to Come to Canada

Though life in Paraguay was becoming more stable, conditions and living standards were still very poor in comparison to those in Canada. During the 1950's, Jacob's brother-in-law Martin Boese (half brother to his second wife Helene) came down to Paraguay to look at the conditions. Martin Boese was a fruit farmer in St. Catharines Ontario, where he also owned a large canning factory. Seeing the conditions in which his relatives lived, Martin suggested that they would be much better off if they would move to Canada, even though it would mean starting over again. A decision to move to another country can not be made lightly. Jacob and his family talked about the possibility for a number of years. Even though they were just beginning to carve out a stable existence in Friesland, the possibilities of life in Canada did look much brighter than those in Paraguay. Martin Boese was willing to help the family get settled into the new country. The economic factors were attractive, and in the end the decision was made to move to Canada.

Before leaving Paraguay, the family farm and everything else they owned was auctioned off. After selling his assets, Jacob had enough money to pay cash for all the plane tickets, with some left to spare. In the summer of 1955, Jacob Past, now 66 years old, and his wife and children Cornelius (D8), Hermine (D9), Regine (D10) and Maria (Wilhelmine's daughter) left Paraguay for Canada. Peter (D7) was unable to come at this time. Immigration officials found a scar in his eye from an earlier sickness. As a result, Peter had to stay behind for a year. During that time he visited with his brother and sister in Buenos Aires, and then later worked for a Friesland farmer until the year was up.

#### Life in Canada

Martin Boese offered Jacob and his family work in his canning factory for the first summer and fall (1955). The family lived in a large dormitory on the farm, provided for all the seasonal workers. The large rooms were sectioned off with hanging blankets which provided

families with some privacy.

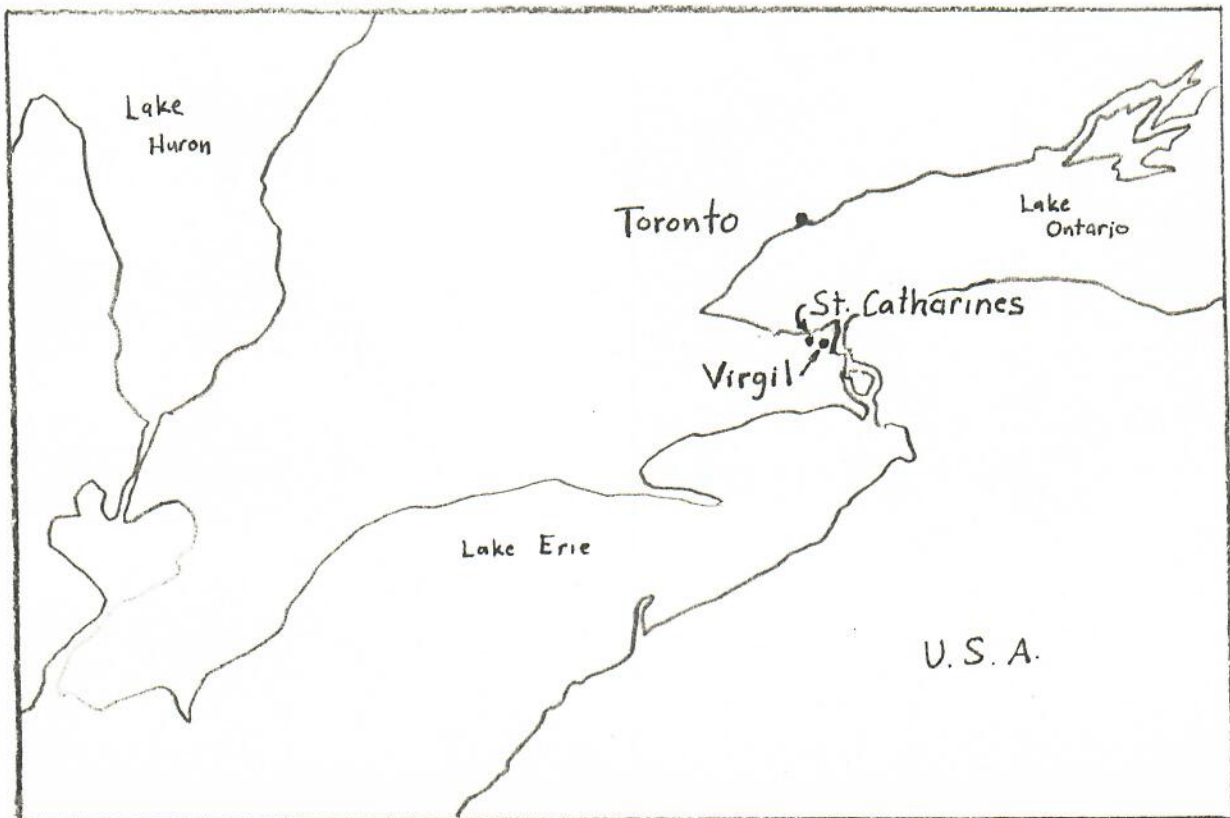
In the fall of 1955 the work in the cannery slowed down, and it was at this time that Jacob secured a job as the custodian of the Niagara United Mennonite Church on Stone Road in Virgil, Ontario. There was a small house on the church grounds which became their home. Jacob and his wife took up church membership at Niagara. The job of cleaning the church was shared by Jacob, his wife and Regine(D10).

Hermaine(D9) got a job cleaning in a doctor's home, a job she held until she got married in 1961. Cornelius(D8) managed to be employed at the Boese factory year round as a mechanic, a job he also held for many years. Regine(D10) went to school, first in St. Catharines and then later in Virgil. After the ninth grade she worked for a year cleaning in a Jewish home. This was followed by a year of work at the Bethesda home for the Mentally Retarded in Vineland Ontario, and one and a half years of study at Elin Bible Institute in Altona Manitoba. Step sister Maria recieved a Sanitorium job as a nurses aid.

The woodworking trade which Jacob had learned from his father many years earlier in Russia made it possible for him to work on the

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Map 9- Southern Ontario





side as a finish carpenter in order to earn extra money. Jacob's strong "Mennonite work ethic" and thriftiness made it possible for him to buy a house before he had been in Canada even one year. In the spring of 1956 he bought a house in St. Catharines on the east corner of Linwell and White streets. He then rented this house out while he and his family continued to live in Virgil.

Jacob's opportunities for doing finish carpentry work were increasing, so the family decided to terminate their job with the Niagara Church, and in 1958 they bought another house at 27 Duncan Drive in St. Catharines. There was much construction work going on in St. Catharines and so Jacob was able to work full-time as a carpenter.

Jacob's son Peter(D7) arrived in Canada in April of 1956 and immediately found a job framing houses (in keeping with family carpentry tradition). Within two years of framing, Peter and some Mennonite carpenter friends decided to go into business for themselves. Peter framed houses as a self-employed sub-contractor until 1983.

The move to Canada ushered in a new era in family history. For hundreds of years East family forefathers had always been rural workers of the land, and they always had lived within closed, strictly Mennonite communities. The family's move to Canada resulted in a change from rural to urban living, where most of the neighbours were non-Mennonite and spoke a language other than German. Living in amongst a new culture and having the (future) children attend secular schools taught by non-Mennonites would undoubtedly bring about a break in tradition and, in the course of time, change ~~the~~ many of the traditions passed down through the generations.

Jacob's oldest daughter Tina(D1), her husband Hermann and family came to Ontario from Friesland in 1957. For three years they tried to find prosperity in Ontario, but it was not to be found easily. They could find little work with which to support the family. They had plans to return to Paraguay, but then in 1959 they found out that another child was on the way. On March 17, 1960 a daughter Betty(E9) was born to them. Before giving up on Canada, the family decided they would try their luck in British Columbia to see if it was any better than Ontario. In June 1960 the family went west to Clearbrook, B.C. Here an Abe Dyck was very instrumental in helping the family in buying their

own farm land. The Jesse family then set up a family berry farm on Bradner Road in Clearbrook.

The years 1958 through till 1962 saw a large number of weddings in the Fast family. In Ontario Jacob's oldest granddaughter Margaret (D1-C2) married Walter Braun December 6, 1958 at Niagara United Church. One year later, December 5, 1959, Jacob's son Peter(D7) married Katharine Brdul in the Vineland United Mennonite Church. On July 2, 1960, Cornelius(D8) married Annie Winter. In Winnipeg, Jacob's oldest grandson Henry(D1-E1) married Alvina Wieler August 20, 1960. Hermine(D9) married John Kliewer on September 9, 1961, and the youngest in the family, Regine, married Edwin Dyck on July 7, 1962.

Just before Christmas 1962, Jacob Fast got quite ill. He had never really been sick before in his life, but now he was experiencing strong stomach pains. After Christmas he went to the doctor who suggested that an operation was necessary. In January they operated and found cancer. The cancer was so wide spread that the doctors could do nothing but allow the illness to take its course. During his illness Jacob spent much time reflecting on his life, and in a letter he wrote to his brother Kornelius<sup>(C1)</sup> in Morden Manitoba in February of 1963, he clearly expresses his faith in God. He confesses of his less than perfect life, yet simultaneously expresses a clear hope and confidence in God's forgiveness. Jacob spent his last days at home where he died on March 16, 1963. Before he died, he was re-united with his brothers Kornelius(C7) & Peter(C5) both from Manitoba, and his sister Elisabeth(C9), all of whom he had not seen since the tumultuous days of the 1920's. Jacob's son Henry(C6) flew north from Argentina to see his father before his death, but he arrived too late. The funeral was held at the Niagara United Mennonite Church on March 20, 1963. Jacob was buried at the Victoria Lawn Cemetery in St. Catharines, Ontario.(cf. Obituary, App. V).

In Canada the Fast family grew very rapidly. Cornelius(D8) and his wife Annie continued to live in the Niagara Peninsula and there they had four children: Karen(E1-1962), Arthur(E2-1963), Manfred(E3-1965) and Hartmut(E4-1971).

Hermine(D9) and John Kliewer moved to Waterloo, and there had three children: Eduard(E1-1963), Helmut(E2-1965), and Nancy(E3-1968).

Regine(D10) and her husband Edwin Dyck made their home in Winnipeg.



They had three children: Roselyn(E1-1965), Renita(E2-1969) and Rodney (E3-1972). The couple spent the years 1967 to 1969 in a Mennonite Volunteer Service Unit in Chicago and Mississippi.

Peter (D7) and Katharine purchased a house at 5 Howard Avenue in St. Catharines, Ontario just before their marriage, where they lived until 1973. Peter and Katharine had four children: Erwin(E1-1960), Arnold(E2-1964), Ronald(E3-1967) and Ingrid(E4-1969). Until March 1983, Peter(D7) was a self-employed carpenter, framing houses. Over the summers his sons always had the opportunity to work with and for their father on the construction site. In 1983 Peter turned to finish carpentry and became employed with Hinterholler Yachts in St. Catharines. In 1973 the family moved a half-mile from their home on Howard Avenue to a new and bigger home at 41 Jefferson Drive. The home was carefully planned and then built by Peter. Over the years the family attended the Vineland United Mennonite Church. In September of 1977 the family decided to change churches and attend the St. Catharines United Mennonite Church which was much closer to home. In 1978 Peter became baptized and took up membership in the church. His son Arnold(E2) was baptized in St. Catharines on May 30, 1982.

The children of Peter(D7) and Katharine first attended Parnell Public School (Kindergarten to Grade 6), Dalewood Senior Public School (Grades 7 and 8) and Lakeport Secondary School. Erwin(E1) studied two years of Architectural Drafting at Mohawk College in Hamilton (1978-1980) and is presently framing houses full-time and doing some drafting on the side. Arnold graduated from Grade 13 in 1982, spent one year at Columbia Bible Institute in Clearbrook B.C., and is presently a theology major at Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Ron(E3) and Ingrid(E4) are presently in high school in St. Catharines.



Peter Fast with his first car - Niagara-on-the-lake, 1958



Marriage of Peter Fast and Katharine Braeul  
Jacob G. Past and wife Wilhelmine at sides  
Dec. 5. 1959



The Family of Peter Fast  
wife Katharine  
Children Ingrid Arnold  
Ronald Erwin  
1982



Epilogue

An attempt has been made to search into the past and to dig up some roots of the Fast family history. Though this paper gives no more than a glimpse of generations gone by, one can however discern a particular history and a unique, rich heritage that can give us and our descendants a sense of identity.

One cannot write history without applying a certain interpretation to the facts. In researching and writing this paper, occasionally certain lessons or morals came to me and I would jot them down on a slip of paper. I've listed some of them below which I'd like to share:

1. No matter how good we have it in Canada today, the days of prosperity, peace and affluence may come to an end very quickly. It has happened before, and it will probably happen again. Material riches cannot be counted on for bringing continued wealth, happiness or meaning in life. If we should lose all we have overnight, what will there be left? Our forefathers had trust and faith in God. If He alone is our ultimate goal in life, we may still suffer disappointments, but we will never be broken!
2. The most distinct teaching of Anabaptists was absolute love, a doctrine later to be called non-resistance. Christians who accept the way of peace would rather be wronged than do wrong to someone else; they would rather die than kill, even in self-defence or in warfare. For this reason our forefathers were so concerned that they would be guaranteed military exemption in the land of their residence. The conviction of the family for generations has been clear, that the Christian ethic does not permit Christians to go to war. Our peace stand has been a witness to the world for 450 years, and today the world needs to hear that message ~~now~~ more than ever. We live in an age of nuclear weaponry, with super-powers capable of destroying life on earth as we know it today. Who will speak up against it? Our heritage is crying out for us to witness to the governments and peoples of the world. If we remain quiet on this issue, how will we justify our inaction to future generations should nuclear disaster befall this planet?
3. In periods of crisis, organizations like the Mennonite Central Committee have come to the aid of our people time and time again (revolution, famine, loss of homeland, relocation etc.). Fortunately, because of their church ties, our forefathers were looked after and provided for. Today we live comfortably, yet there are thousands of families around the world who are presently suffering from revolution, famine and the loss of their homeland. Who will provide for them? MCC still does relief work around the world, and is one organization we can feel good about supporting.

4. As we grow older, we must pass on our life story, experiences and our Christian faith. When Hebrew children would ask their fathers who God was, their fathers would not tell them theology, but would speak of how God led them out of Egypt. We must tell our children/grandchildren (and others) how God has worked in our life over the years, and thereby encourage future generations in the faith!
  
5. Our parents and grandparents are a rich and valuable resource of experience. It is surely worth our time to sit down with them, ask and listen. The great Roman statesman Cicero once said: "Old age, especially an honoured old age, has so great authority, that this is of more value than all the pleasures of youth." Keep records, write down stories, etc.; future generations will be very thankful.



Appendix I

Aron Past Family Tree

Aron Past(A1)

b. 1820's(?) - , Molotschna, Russia.  
d. ? -Hierschau, Molotschna, Russia  
m. 1847/48 -Anna? Maria? -she later remarried Isaak Baerg,  
c.f. Appendix 4

Children Past:

B1 Johann b. Nov. 2, 1848 Hierschau d. Dec. 8, 1889 m. Aganetha Kunkel  
B2 Peter lived 44 years  
B3 Gerhard b. Apr. 7, 1862 Hierschau d. Feb. 8, 1908 m. Justina Riediger  
B4 (daughter) Hierschau m. Kornelius Goerzen?  
Stobbe?

A1-B1 Johann Aron Past c.f. Appendix 3

A1-B2 Peter Aron Past -lived in Puchtig, or New Samara c.f. Appendicies 3&4

A1-B3 Gerhard Aron Past c.f. Appendix 2

A1-B4 ? - Elisabeth Fedrau(A1-B3-C9) writes that her father  
had one sister named Aganetha (Frau Stobbe).  
- Appendix 3 states her name is Elisabeth, who later  
married Kornelius Goerzen.  
- Appendix 4 states her name as Maria, who married  
Kornelius Goerzen.

Appendix II- Excerpt from "Geneology of Abraham Riediger 1752-1978"  
pp. 112-125. Descendants of Gerhard Aron Fast(35) and  
Justina Riediger.

NS- Since this book follows a different line, the numbering system  
does not agree fully with the one used in this book (cf. App 1).  
Some corrections and additions have been made

A2 - B8 - pp. 6 & 112

Justina Riediger \*May 29, 1859 Lichtfelde, Mol., S. Russia  
+Sep. 18, 1941 - She came to Canada (via Moscow) 1930  
∞ Nov, 1885

Gerhard Aron Fast \*April 7, 1862 Hierschau, +Feb. 8, 1906 Krassikow  
Moved to Neu-Samara 1891. *Stomach Cancer??*

Children Fast:

C1 Maria	*Dec. 9, 1888	-Peter Schroeder
C2 Jacob	*Oct. 4, 1892	-Margarete Janz
C3 Peter	*Sep. 14, 1894	-Maria Ewert
C4 Justina	*Apr. 23, 1896	-Peter Goerzen
C5 Kornelius	*July 26, 1897	-Katharina Penner
C6 Elisabeth	*Jan. 6, 1901	-Wilhelm Federau
C7 Susanna	*Feb. 14, 1903	-Heinrich Isaak

-Gerhard	* 1890	- +Apr. 8, 1908	Liver Cancer
-Abram	* Mar. 15, 1905	- + Mar. 10, 1907	
-Suse	* Dec. _____, 1899	- + Dec. _____, 1899	- Infant death
-Aganita	* _____, 1886	- + _____, 1882	

A2 - B8 - C1 - p. 112

Maria Fast \*Dec. 9, 1888 +July 26, 1977 USSR

∞ Peter Schroeder \* + 1942  
This family settled 1910 in Barnaul, Siberia and stayed there.  
In 1977 there were 112 descendants. No further information.

A2 - B8 - C2 - pp. 112 & 114

Jacob Gerhard Fast \*Oct. 4, 1892 Kuterlja, Neu Samara, Russia  
+Mar. 16, 1963 (stomach cancer)

∞ 1914  
Margareta Janz \*Nov. 8, 1895, +Dec. 15, 1930 Paraguay  
They left via Moscow, Germany, for Paraguay 1929-30  
Came to Canada 1955

Children Fast:

D1 Katharina	*Mar. 12, 1915	-Herman Jesse
D2 Jacob	*	- + Germany (war)
D3 Margaret	* June 23, 1922	-Cornelius Harder
D4 Baby Sarah	*	- + 1930 Paraguay
D5 Maria	*Nov. 10, 1927	-Silvestre Aranda
D6 Henry	*Mar. 1, 1929	-Dido Capuss

(continued)



Aganita b. 1886  
d. 1882

Maria -C1-113

Peter Schroeder Tina-D1-120

Gerhard b. May 21, 1890  
d. Apr 14, 1908

Jacob-C2-114

Margarete Janz  
Helene Janzen

Peter-C3-120

Maria Ewert

Justina-C4-122

Peter Goertzen

-122  
Cornelius-C5

Kath. Penner

b. Dec 1899  
Suse d. Dec 1899

-123  
Elisabeth-C6

Wilh. Fedrau

-124  
Susanna-C7-

Hein. Isaac

b. Mar. 15, 1905  
Abram d. Mar 10, 1907

Bernhard Fast

Johann-D2-121

Erna Peters

Peter-D3-121

Minna-D4-121

Johann Peters  
Annie-D5-122

Thomas Gamble

Jessie-D1-122

Vernon Dickson

Susie-D2-123

Bill Burns

Betty-D3-123

Archer Garrioch

Willy-D1-123

Mary Ewert  
-124

Justina-D1-

Jacob Toews

John-D2-124

Sara Voth

Frank-D3-124

Elsie Rempel

James-D4-125

Ella Mickol.

Rudy-D5-125

Helen Hiebert

Bertha-D6-125

Frank  
Hoepfner

Elmer-E1-121

Sharon Langenh.  
Linda-E2

Kenneth-E3

Fast - 121

Peters-121

Brandt-E1

Jason -E2

Joan -E1-122

Stewart McCrea

Craig -E2

Lorna-E1-123

Kim Blakestone

Sherryl-E2

Garrioch

Fedrau -123

Isaac - 124

Isaac - 124

Martin -E1

Robert -E2

Glenn -E3

Hoepfner-125

Dorothy-E1

Dennis-E2

Douglas-E3

Ronald-E1-121

Susan Delbridge  
Mervyn -E2

Janice -E3

Jacqueline-E4

Charlene -E1

Bunt -E2

Glen -E3

Kevin -E4

Richard -E1

Sylvia -E2

Wesley -E3

Stanley -E4

Esther-E1

Sandra-E2-124

Cornelia-E3-124

John Reimer  
Paul -E4

Ruth -E1

Donald-E2

Terry -E1

Janet -E2

Steven -E3

Justina Riediger - Gerhard Fast

A2 - B8 - p. 6 & 113

Helene Janzen - Jacob Fast - Margareta Janz

A2 - B8 - C2 - Pr. 112 & 113

Katharina-D1-116

Herman Jesse

Jacob -D2

Helmut-E1-118

Margot Triebe

Margaret-D3-118

Eduard-E2-118

Dieter - F1

Cornelius Harder

Cecilia Tejada

Jürgen - F2

Luis -E1-118

Baby -D4 Sarah

Maria Tejada

Carlos-E2-119

Martin -F3

Zulma

Mario -E3

Edward -F1

Natalie - F2

Maria-D5-118

Erwin -E1

Cecilia -F1

Silvestre Aranda

Arnold -E2

Daniel -F2

Karin -E1

Guillermo Vites

Rudolf -E2

Henry -D6-119

Ronald -E3

Natalia -F1

Dido Capussi

Ingrid -E4

Karen -E1

Robert Kremble

Peter-D7-119

Fast - 119

Arthur -E2

Kaethe Braeul

Kliwer - 120

Manfred -E3

-119  
Cornelius-D8

Roselyn -E1

Hartmut -E4

Annie Winter

Renita -E2

Eduard -E1

Hermine -D9-120

Rodney -E3

Helmut -E2

John Kliwer

Nancy -E3

Regine -D10-120

Edwin Dyck

Albert -D11



Riediger - Fast

A2 - B8 - C2

Jacob G. Fast remarried 1931  
Helene Janzen \*Feb. 24, 1902, + Aug. 8, 1946 Grossweide, Paraguay, Friesland  
Daughter of Isbrandt Joh. Janzen \*Oct. 9, 1863, + Sep. 3, 1944  
& Elisabeth nee Ploennert \*Aug. 15, 1860, + Nov. 12, 1930

- D7 Peter \*May 5, 1932 -Kaethe Braeul
- D8 Cornelius \*Mar. 20, 1935 -Annie Winter
- D9 Hermine \*Aug. 3, 1938 -John Kliewer
- D10 Regine \*May 29, 1941 -Edwin Dyck
- D11 Albert \* 1945 died at birth

Jacob G. Fast remarried June 8, 1947 Grossweide, Paraguay  
Mrs. Wilhelmine Letkemann nee Barent \*June 5, 1894  
She had 2 daughters: Maria Loetkemann  
Frieda Fedrau  
1 Son : Henry Loethemann

A2 - B8 - C2 - D1 - pp. 114 & 116

Katharina Fast \*Mar. 12, 1915, Krassikow, New Samara  
∞ Mar. 23, 1933

Hermann Andreas Jesse \* June 6, 1906

Children Jesse:

- E1 Henry \*July 7, 1934 -Alvina Wieler
- E2 Margaret \*Mar. 9, 1937 -Walter Braun
- E3 Frieda \*Aug. 29, 1939 -John Peters
- E4 Adina \*Mar. 30, 1942 -Wesley Rahn
- E5 Lydia \*Sep. 20, 1944 -Edmund Dueck
- E6 Victor \*May 3, 1948 -Anne Krahn
- E7 Willy \*Dec. 6, 1950 -Ellen Graham
- E8 Harry \*July 12, 1953 -Helen Krahn
- E9 Betty \* March 17, 1960 ∞ Nov 21, 1980 -Phil Friesen \* Feb 13, 1958

A2 - B8 - C2 - D1 - E1 - p. 116

Henry Jesse \*July 7, 1935 Fernheim, Paraguay  
∞ Aug. 20, 1960

Alvina Wieler \*Oct. 18, 1935

Daughter of David & Maria Wieler

Children Jesse:

- F1 Marvin Wilfred \*Nov. 9, 1962
- F2 Dorothy Marina \*May 20, 1966

A2 - B8 - C2 - D1 - E2 - p. 116

Margaret Jesse \*Mar. 9, 1937  
∞ Dec. 6, 1958

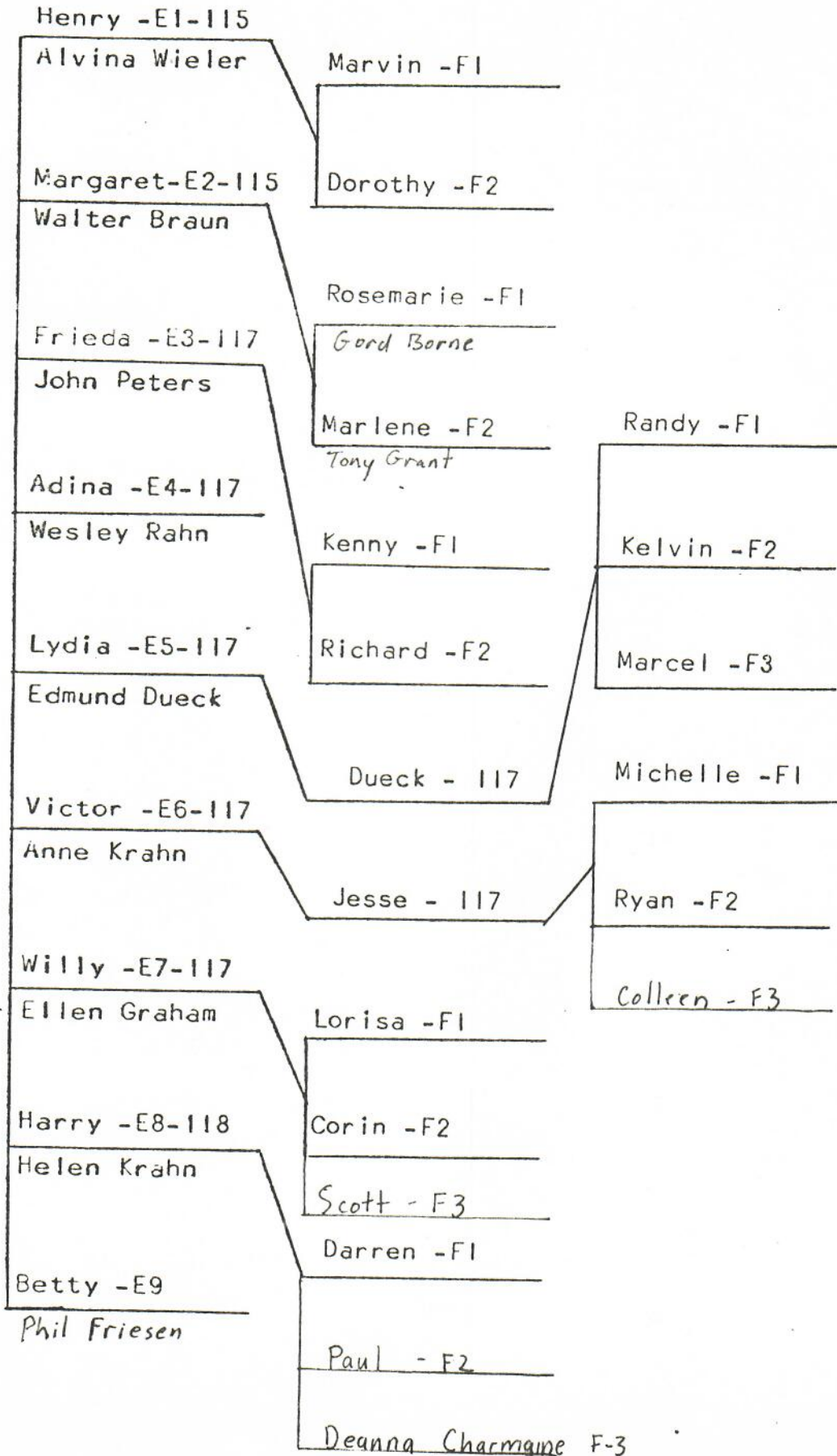
Walter Braun \*Aug. 8, 1935

Son of Jacob & Maria Braun

Children Braun:

- F1 Rosemarie \*Jan. 3, 1960 ∞ Dec 17, 1983 - Gord Berne \*Jan. 8, 1960
- F2 Marlene \*May 18, 1961 ∞ May 26 1984 - Tony Grant

Katharina Fast - Hermann Jesse  
A2 - B8 - C2 - D - pp. 114 & 115





Riediger - Fast - Jesse

A2 - B8 - C2 - D1 - E3 - p.116

Frieda Jesse \*Aug.29,1939

∞ Apr.11,1963

John Peters \*June 18,1934

Son of Peter & Katharina Peters

Children Peters:

F1 Kenny \*July 1,1964

F2 Richard Clark \*Mar.27,1971

A2 - B8 - C2 - D1 - E4 - p.116

Adina Jesse \*Mar.30,1942

∞ July 24,1965

Wesley Rahn \*Dec.19,1937

Son of Wilhelm & Lydia Rahn

A2 - B8 - C2 - D1 - E5 - p.116

Lydia Jesse \*Sep.20,1944

∞ Sep. 7,1963

Edmund Dueck \*Jan. 6,1943

Son of Heinrich & Margaretha Dueck

Children Dueck:

F1 Randy \*Nov.13,1965

F2 Kelvin Leslie \*July31,1969

F3 Marcel Lance \*May 4,1975

A2 - B8 - C2 - D1 - E6 - p.116

Victor Jesse \*May 3,1948

∞ Sep. 26,1970

Anne Krahn \*June 28,1951

Daughter of John Krahn\*Oct. 6,1914

& Helena nee Sawatzky \*June28,1922

Children Jesse:

F1 Michelle LeeAnn \*Dec.11,1972

F2 Ryan Patric \*May 26,1976

F3 Colleen \*Jan 2, 1978

A2 - B8 - C2 - D1 - E7 - p.116

Willy Jesse \*Dec. 6,1950

∞ Dec.30,1971

Ellen Graham \*June 1,1950

Daughter of William Howard & Tena Graham

Children Jesse:

F1 Lorisa Dawn \*Jan.15,1975

F2 Corin DeAnne \*Feb.15,1977

F3 Scott \*Oct. 14,1980

Riediger - Fast - Jesse

A2 - B8 - C2 - D1 - E8 - p.116

Harry Jesse \*July 12, 1953

∞ July 16, 1973

Helen Krahn \*July 20, 1953

Daughter of John Krahn \*Oct. 6, 1914  
& Helena nee Sawatzky \*June 28, 1922

Children Jesse:

F1 Darren Joel \*Nov. 15, 1975

F2 Paul <sup>May</sup> 8, 1978

F3 Deanna Charmaine April 2, 1982

A2 - B8 - C2 - D3 - p.114

Margaret Fast \*June 23, 1922 (July 19, 1923?) Russia - Krassikow, New Samara

∞

Cornelius Harder \*Jan. 5, 1909 Russia, +Aug. 14, 1971

Children Harder:

E1 Helmut \*June 6, 1945 Argentine -Margot Triebe

E2 Eduard \*July 1, 1949 " -Cecilia M. Tejada

A2 - B8 - C2 - D3 - E1 - p.114

Helmut Harder \*June 6, 1945 Argentine

∞ Aug. 14, 1971

Margot Triebe \*Aug. 29, 1951 Germany

Children Harder:

F1 Dieter \*Feb. 9, 1973 Canada, St. Catharines

F2 Juergen \*Sep. 28, 1974 " "

F3 Martin \*Apr. 29, 1980 " "

A2 - B8 - C2 - D3 - E2 - p.114

Eduardo Harder \*July 1, 1949 Argentine

∞ Dec. 13, 1975

Cecilia Mercedes Tejada \*Sep. 24, 1952 Peru

Children Harder:

F1 Edward Daniel \*Sep. 30, 1976 Canada, St. Catharines

F2 Natalie \*Apr. 15, 1982 " "

A2 - B8 - C2 - D5 - E1 - p.114

Maria Fast \*Nov. 10, 1927, Krassikow, New Samara, Russia

∞

Silvestre Aranda \*Dec. 31,

Children Aranda:

E1 Luis Alberto \*Aug. 7, 1950 Argentine -Maria C. Tejada

E2 Carlos Florentino \*May 14, 1954 " -Zulma

E3 Mario Oswaldo \*May 15, 1956 " "

A2 - B8 - C2 - D5 - E1 - p.114

Luis Alberto Aranda \*Aug. 7, 1950 Chaco, Argentine

∞ Dec. 6, 1972

Maria Conception Tejada \*Aug. 26, 1949 Puerto Eten, Peru  
(continued)



Riediger - Fast - Aranda

A2 - B8 - C2 - D5 - E1

Children of Luis A. Aranda & Maria C. Tejada - continued:

F1 Cecilia \*May 17, 1974 St. Catharines, Ont.

F2 Daniel \*Apr. 2, 1976 "

A2 - B8 - C2 - D5 - E2 - p.114.

Carlos Florentino Aranda \*May 14, 1954 Chaco, Argentine

oo

Zulma

Daughter Aranda:

F1 Natalia Cecilia \*Aug. 30, 1974 Chaco, Argentine

- - -

A2 - B8 - C2 - D6 - p.114

Henry Fast \*Mar. 1, 1929, Krassikow, New Samara, Russia

oo

Dido Capussi \* Dec. 1, 1931

Children

F1 Karen \* Oct 24, 1958 Buenos Aires, Argentina - Guillermo Vites, Argent

F2 Rudolf \* Oct. 24, 1961 " "

A2 - B8 - C2 - D7 - p.114

Peter Fast \*May 5, 1932 Rosenort, Paraguay

Entered Canada 1956

oo Dec. 5, 1959 Vineland, Ont.

Katharine Braeul \*Nov. 19, 1937 Mariental, Mol., = 1955

Daughter of Franz Braeul \*Dec. 16, 1896 Rudnerweide, SR.  
& Helene nee Thiessen \*Dec. 6, 1903 Schardau, Mol. SR.

Children Fast:

E1 Erwin Peter \*Sep. 29, 1960 St. Catharines

E2 Arnold Victor \*Jan. 21, 1964 "

E3 Ronald Marvin \*May 4, 1967 "

E4 Ingrid Arlene \*May 8, 1969 "

A2 - B8 - C2 - D8 - p.114

Cornelius Fast \*Mar. 20, 1935 Rosenort, Chaco, Paraguay, = 1975

St. Catharines, Ont. Entered Canada Aug. 1, 1955

oo July 2, 1960

Annie Winter \*July 26, 1942 Germany

Daughter of Cornelius Winter & Anna nee Penner

Children Fast:

E1 Karen \*July 1, 1962 St. Catharines - Robert Kremble (1981)

E2 Arthur \*June 4, 1963 "

E3 Manfred \*June 20, 1965 "

E4 Hartmut \*Aug. 2, 1971 "

Riediger - Fast

A2 - B8 - C2 - D9 - p.114

Hermine Fast \*Aug. 3, 1938 Grossweide, Friesland, Paraguay  
= Grossweide, Paraguay

∞ Sep. 9, 1961 Niagara on the Lake, Ont.

John Kliewer \*July 22, 1937 Hamburg, Germany

Entered Canada 1957 - Toronto

Son of Henry Kliewer & Nella nee Stobbe

Children Kliewer:

E1 Eduard John \*Aug. 11, 1963 Kitchener, Ont.

E2 Helmut Henry \*Jan. 26, 1965 "

E3 Nancy Arlene \*Dec. 9, 1968 "

A2 - B8 - C2 - D10 - p.114

Regine Fast \*May 29, 1941 Grossweide, Friesland, Paaguay  
= 1959 Niagara on the Lake, Ont.

∞ July 7, 1962 Niagara on the Lake, Ont.

Edwin J. Dyck \* 1940 McCreary, Man. = 1959 McGregor, Man.

Son of Peter Dyck & Bertha nee Loewen

Children Dyck:

E1 Roselyn F. \*Sep. 30, 1965 Winnipeg

E2 Renita F. \*Oct. 14, 1969 "

E3 Rodney M. \*June 17, 1972 "

A2 - B8 - C3 - p.112

Peter G. Fast \*Sep. 14, 1894 Kuterla, Russia + Dec 19, 1980

∞ Mar. 8, 1922

Maria Ewert \*May 17, 1900 Krasnoje, Russia

Came to Canada 1925. She was 1977 in a serious traffic  
accident with a pelvis bone and both legs broken.

Daughter of Jonas Ewert

Children Fast:

D1 Tina \*Jan. 24, 1923 Krasikow -Bernhard Fast

D2 Johann \*Nov. 24, 1924 " -Erna Peters

D3 Peter \*Oct. 30, 1926 Winkler -

D4 Minna \*Jan. 18, 1928 Whitewater -Johann Peters

D5 Annie Frances Aug. 14, 1931 Croll -Thomas Gamble

A2 - B8 - C3 - D1 - p.112

Tina Fast \*Jan. 24, 1923 Krasikow, Russia

∞ Nov. 27, 1943

Bernhard Fast \*Dec. 4, 1914 Tiegerweide, Ukraine

Children Fast:

E1 Elmer \*Dec. 9, 1951 Boissevain -Sharon Langenhoff

E2 Linda Susan \*Oct. 5, 1955 "

E3 Kenneth James \*Sep. 7, 1959 Brandon, Man.



Appendix V

Obituary- Jacob Fast

"Der Bote", April 2, 1963 p. 7

**Jacob G. Fast †**  
Ontario

Mein lieber Mann, Jacob G. Fast, wurde am 4. Oktober 1892 in Krassifowo auf Neusamara in Rußland geboren. Seine Eltern waren Gerhard und Justina Fast geborene Niediger, die von der Molotschnaja 1891 in Neusamara siedelten.

Dort verlebte mein Mann seine Kinder- und Jugendzeit. 1914 trat er in die erste Ehe mit Margarete Janz, mit der er 16 Jahre zusammen leben durfte. Der Herr schenkte ihnen 6 Kinder: 2 Söhne und 4 Töchter, von denen ein Sohn im Kriege in Deutschland beschollen ist und eine Tochter klein starb.

1929 konnte mein Mann mit seiner Familie über Moskau nach Deutschland entkommen. Im Sommer 1930 zog er nach Paraguay. Hier starb seine erste Frau schon im ersten Siedlungsjahr und hinterließ ihn mit 6 unmündigen Kindern auf der schweren Ansiedlung im Chaco.

1931 fand er in Helene Janz seine zweite Lebensgefährtin, mit der er 15 Jahre Freude und Leid teilen durfte. Diese Ehe wurde mit 4 Kindern gesegnet: 2 Söhnen und 2 Töchtern, die alle in Canada sind. Im Jahre 1946 wurde ihm auch die zweite Frau durch den Tod genommen.

Am 8. Juni 1947 trat er mit mir, Wilhelmine, geborene Warendt, verwitwete Lettkemann, in die dritte Ehe, die in Großweide auf Friesland in Paraguay geschlossen wurde. Mein Mann war aus dem Chaco inzwischen nach Friesland übergesiedelt, und ich kam mit einer Tochter mit der ersten „Wo-

lendamt" nach Paraguay.

Im Sommer 1955 wanderten wir nach Canada aus, wo wir in Ontario eine neue Heimat finden durften. 15½ Jahre glücklichen Ehelebens hat uns der Herr geschenkt. Nach Weihnachten und Neujahr arbeitete mein Mann noch, erkrankte aber bald, und nach kurzer, aber schwerer Krankheit (Strebs) nahm der Herr ihn von unserer Seite, um ihn in sein ewiges Freudenreich zu versetzen.

Es überleben ihn seine trauernde Witwe, 3 Söhne, 5 Töchter, 2 Stieftöchter, 18 Großkinder, 3 Urgroßkinder, 2 Brüder und 4 Schwestern und ein großer Verwandtenkreis.

Sein Leben war Mühe und Arbeit und sehr wechselreich. Gerne wäre er noch bei uns geblieben, aber als er sah, der Herr hatte es anders vor, wurde er stille im Herrn und machte sich fertig für die obere Heimat. Ein besonderer Trost in den letzten schweren Tagen waren ihm die Verse: „Der dir alle deine Sünde vergibt und heilt alle deine Gebrechen; der dein Leben vom Verderben erlöset, der dich krönnet mit Gnade und Barmherzigkeit.“

Die trauernde Witwe Wilhelmine  
Fast und Kinder

### Footnotes

- 1 Karl Stump, The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the Years 1763 to 1862, (Lincoln, Neb., 1978), p. 41.
- 2 Gustav M. Reimer, "Fast," Mennonite Encyclopedia, 1957, vol. II, p. 314.
- 3 Term used by Pope John XXIII (1958-1963) to identify Protestants as he initiated a new relationship with them.
- 4 Walter Klassen, "The Nature of the Anabaptist Protest," Mennonite Quarterly Review, XLV (October 1971), p. 311.
- 5 David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia," Mennonite Quarterly Review, XLVII, 4 (October 1973), p. 47.
- 6 Actual name not clear. See Appendix One.
- 7 Frank H. Epp, Mennonite Exodus, (Altona, Man., 1962), p. 24.
- 8 C. Henry Smith, The Story of the Mennonites, (Newton, Kan., 1981 ed.), p. 20.
- 9 Epp, op. cit., p. 42.
- 10 J. Winfield Fretz, Pilgrims in Paraguay, (Scottsdale, Pa., 1953), p. 25.
- 11 Ibid., p. 25.
- 12 Ibid., p. 24.
- 13 Smith, op. cit., p. 493.
- 14 Ibid., p. 495.



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